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(Provisional agenda item 3)

ECE OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Note by the Executive Secretary

The operational activities carried out by ECE aim at assisting countries in implementing ECE's instruments (conventions, norms, standards and guidelines) or in following agreed policies and best practices.

The reflections of the secretariat about its operational activities take into account the debate by subsidiary bodies on operational activities and the external auditors' comments, and lead to the proposals contained in the document, of which the following are highlighted:

- operational activities should be based on results of intergovernmental discussions and on actual ECE expertise (paragraph 5)
- high priority should continue to be given to demands from, and for projects in, CIS and Balkan countries (paragraph 12)
- parallel development of both country specific and subregional programmes continues to be an appropriate approach; interregional cooperation and cross sectoral programmes should also be developed (paragraphs 13-15)

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- ECE needs more extrabudgetary funding and it is proposed that countries which do not have ECE on their list of eligible institutions for receiving funds for operational activities should now include it (paragraph 27)
- as discussed in paragraphs 31-36, better coordination of all operational activities, as well as mechanisms for systematic feedback and evaluation, are required.

1. A key responsibility of ECE is the promotion, dissemination, diffusion and implementation of its instruments (conventions, norms, standards and guidelines). In its areas of competence it also has to facilitate exchanges of experiences, to inform on best practices and to promote agreed policies. The activities related to this responsibility benefit all member countries directly, for obvious reasons, and indirectly, as instruments developed by ECE are all the more efficient when they are used by all its members. For the purposes of this paper, such activities are called operational when they are directed at countries with structural weaknesses which require *assistance* in implementing these instruments or following agreed policies or best practices. It is considered that this assistance will contribute to strengthening their institutions and facilitate their integration with the European and global economies.

2. ECE's operational activities are carried out by its Regional Advisers and by the Coordinating Unit for Operational Activities as well as by a number of "regular staff" who are also involved, at times, in the delivery of such activities.

3. The addendum to this document summarizes the diverse operational activities carried out by ECE since the fifty-forth session of the Commission. On the one hand, the evaluation of such activities is positive: the activities requested by subsidiary bodies have, ex post, been favourably reviewed by them and similar activities have been requested for the future; countries have expressed appreciation for the advice provided by Regional Advisers and the demand for their services exceeds their capacity. On the other hand, the External Auditors, who, at ECE's request recently conducted a review of the role of the Coordinating Unit and the Regional Advisers, concluded that the objectives and impacts of the Unit and the Regional Advisory Programme were being compromised by certain weaknesses:

- lack of strategic planning. The Auditors acknowledge that it is difficult as the activities of the Regional Advisers are demand-driven. They recommend that they maintain an annual work plan;
- insufficiency of extra-budgetary funding;
- no fund-raising strategy.

The Auditors did not review the operational activities carried out by the regular staff at the request of the subsidiary bodies.

4. The secretariat has therefore held extensive discussions on the goal of operational activities and on whether the existing resources are being used in the best way to achieve maximum impact. The results of these discussions are developed below under the following headings:

- The objectives of operational activities
- Priorities: exploiting ECE advantages
- Cooperation with partner institutions
- Involvement of governments
- Funding operational activities
- ECE's mechanism and structure for operational activities, their monitoring and evaluation

I. THE OBJECTIVES OF OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES

5. The definition of operational activities is set out in paragraph 1 above. It implies that these activities aim at enhancing the implementation of ECE conventions, protocols, norms and standards, promoting best practices and agreed policies and supporting European cooperation and integration and the transition process. To a great extent, the operational activities pursued thus far by ECE comply with the above-mentioned objectives. Sometimes, however, they go beyond and are not based on the results of ECE intergovernmental discussions or negotiations or on actual ECE expertise. This should be avoided in the future and ECE operational activities should be focussed on its actual expertise.

Implementation of ECE's instruments

6. An important share of ECE's operational activities derives from decisions made by Principal Subsidiary Bodies (PSBs) and their subsidiary bodies and serves to enhance the implementation of agreed ECE-developed legal instruments and policies in countries which need assistance in institution and capacity building, key factors for progress in transition. The implementation of such instruments is in the interests of all ECE members since the benefits of transboundary instruments are far greater if applied by all member countries and harmonization of rules and policies facilitates pan-European cooperation.

Promotion of best practices and agreed policies

7. ECE's intergovernmental framework allows it to identify best practices in institution building and policy formulation, in all areas of its activities, operational or not, in western Europe

and in a number of countries which are more advanced in the transition process. The use of these best practices should be promoted in countries less advanced in the transition process

Support to European cooperation and integration

8. Support to European cooperation and integration arises from the fact that many of ECE's instruments address transboundary issues, which in fact or potentially are shared by all member countries. Moreover, since they are all implemented by EU countries, they are also part of the "acquis communautaire". In addition, and this is important, ECE has the proven capacity to add a regional dimension to national perspectives by gathering countries of a subregion around the same table to solve, in all areas of its expertise, technical problems of common concern.

Support to the transition process

9. Capacity building has emerged as a core goal in all UN system operational activities. This effort, which contributes to better governance and the rule of law, needs to be sustained over several years since it takes time for institutions to work effectively. ECE contributes to this effort in line with paragraphs 5, 6 and 7 above, through workshops and seminars, by establishing and facilitating access to networks of experts and policy-makers, by helping in the elaboration of projects and proposals and by assisting in their implementation.

10. While continuing these well-established forms, innovation in the delivery of technical cooperation can be promoted by adopting new techniques such as distance learning, cooperating with research institutions, bench-marking and developing performance indicators.

11. It is important to reiterate that participation in ECE Committees, Convention Bodies and Working Groups contributes to the development of networks among officials exercising similar responsibilities. It may facilitate bilateral cooperation and improve the expertise of all participants.

II. PRIORITIES: EXPLOITING ECE ADVANTAGES

12. Among the countries with economies in transition, some are less advanced than others in the transition process to fully fledged market economies. It is proposed to continue to give high priority to demands from, and for projects in, CIS and Balkan countries.

13. In the perspective of European integration, it is considered that operational activities can be more efficient and effective if provided in a framework of subregional programmes. In addition,

as a neutral forum, ECE is well placed to develop such programmes and it has gained expertise with the Southeast European Cooperative Initiative (SECI) and the Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA). Political constraints, however, often tend to slow down the development and implementation of subregional programmes. This is the case in the Caucasus for which, in principle, a subregional approach would be appropriate. Therefore, parallel development of both country specific and subregional programmes, as is currently done, would appear to be the appropriate approach.

14. In addition to the above-mentioned subregions, ECE member States have expressed interest in developing operational activities of direct interest to the Mediterranean countries. Several concrete proposals have been formulated for conferences and projects in the areas of energy, environment, transport, trade facilitation and statistics. The possibility of developing cooperation with ESCWA and ECA on joint Mediterranean projects would serve to increase interregional cooperation and might facilitate fund-raising, which has always been a major impediment to implementing projects in this subregion. The Senior Adviser shared between the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), UNCTAD and the five regional commissions for the development of interagency programmes will help some of the Mediterranean projects to materialize.

15. Another potential advantage of ECE which should be exploited in operational activities is its multi-sectoral nature. Already the Environmental Performance Reviews mobilize several Ministries at the country level and constitute what should be considered as one of the most successful operational activities. The Joint Programme of Action for Transport and Environment and the Health and Environment Protocol, which are interlinked and which involve several ministerial departments for their implementation, as well as gender mainstreaming, could lead to cross sectoral programmes. It is proposed that the Coordinating Unit support or develop such programmes with the Divisions concerned.

III. COOPERATION WITH PARTNER INSTITUTIONS

16. Close cooperation between ECE and other organizations and institutions in Europe can help to enhance ECE's profile, increase the effect of its programme delivery, mobilize resources and ensure their best use. It would also discourage other Organizations, because of lack of knowledge, from proposing instruments incompatible with those developed in ECE and/or from undertaking overlapping activities. As an illustration, some countries have considered undertaking, in the framework of OSCE, a project similar to the project of SPECA for water and energy for which ECE has received a contribution from the Development Fund of the General Assembly. The Secretary-General of OSCE and the Executive Secretary of ECE have had

conversations on the matter and would like to unite their efforts. It is hoped that member countries will support this approach which would be consistent with their general stand to avoid duplication.

17. Within the UN system, it is hoped that cooperation in the area of operational activities will be enhanced in the context of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), which is currently being developed. ECE should intensify its efforts to involve the Resident Coordinators more in its operational activities and will follow the development of UNDAF more closely.

18. ECE's participation in SECI and in the Stability Pact Working Table on Economic Reconstruction, Development and Cooperation has opened the door to greater cooperation between ECE, the EC, international financial institutions and other organizations involved.

19. Cooperation with the EC Directorates in all areas of ECE's competence has been fruitful at the technical level and financing has been provided for some projects. It is hoped that ECE will be the implementing agency for some specific projects: EUROSTAT has already taken an initiative in this direction for the improvement of statistics in the Balkans. More generally, as the enlargement process mobilizes more and more attention and resources in the EC, the ECE could increase its activity in other parts of Europe for the promotion of its instruments which, as mentioned above, are part of the "acquis communautaire" and would promote unity in Europe.

20. Subregional organizations or initiatives such as the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC), Central European Initiative (CEI) or Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), are, or could be, partners providing an institutional framework and a geographical focus to help achieve the objectives of ECE's operational activities. This depends, however, on the capacity of their secretariats and on the will of their member countries to use pan-European instruments as a basis for closer subregional cooperation.

21. ECE is also well-placed to promote dialogue between the public and private sectors. ECE operational activities, such as those related to the UN/ECE BOT Group or the Human Settlements Advisory Network, permit such a dialogue. The Gas Centre, which gathers together major gas enterprises, allows participants to cooperate on technical issues and to exchange views on governmental or EU policies. The feedback to governments is done through the Working Party on Gas. Governments may wish to consider encouraging similar arrangements for steel and chemicals and for major utilities, privatized or not. Such dialogue between the public and private sectors should, of course, be open and subject to transparent rules of procedure.

22. Cooperation with non-governmental organizations could help to achieve some of the objectives of ECE operational activities, in particular in the implementation of the Aarhus Convention.

IV. INVOLVEMENT OF GOVERNMENTS

23. The increased demand for operational activities by Governments on the one hand and the limited human and financial resources available on the other, require a more active involvement of ECE countries benefiting from operational activities in directly supporting them. The use of national expertise in the implementation of operational activities and the involvement of local partners contribute to the quality of these activities and projects themselves and to the sustainability of their outcome. As a rule, recipient countries should therefore provide in-kind or local contributions.

24. In addition, ECE could help those countries less advanced in the transition process to draw upon the experience of those more advanced. It is proposed to establish a roster of national experts and advisers in every area of ECE operational activities with the assistance of the countries concerned.

V. FUNDING OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES

25. ECE's operational activities are primarily funded by that section of the regular budget covering regional advisory services (salaries and travel costs) and by extrabudgetary funds, in most cases in the form of earmarked contributions for specific projects. In addition, as noted above, regular staff spend part of their time in organizing seminars, workshops and study tours decided by subsidiary bodies.

What is needed?

26. Obviously there is a need for more resources simply to finance activities where ECE is judged to have unique expertise and to be the most cost efficient institution to provide assistance. (Member States are invited to compare the cost of a seminar organized by ECE with one organized by any other organization.) In this connection,

- the Trust Fund for Assistance to Countries in Transition (TFACT) should be replenished in an unearmarked fashion; this would increase the possibility of financing participants from countries most in need to allow them to attend capacity building and other relevant events;

- concerning projects, some flexibility should be introduced in the use of funds, also to facilitate the participation of experts with insufficient funding to cover travel costs.

- funds for advisory services in specific fields, including gender mainstreaming, would be needed to complement the existing pool of Regional Advisers. By engaging experts on short term contracts, maximum utilization of the funds would be ensured; moreover, the fields of expertise could be changed according to need.

Why not more resources?

27. As long as ECE is not considered by donor countries and funding institutions as a normal and efficient channel for delivering assistance to the transition process, its extrabudgetary contributions will remain uncertain and unpredictable, despite the fact that ECE receives numerous and increasing requests from member States to extend its operational activities and has a good record in delivering these activities. This omission, which dates back to the Cold War era, is no longer appropriate now that there is both the need for institution building in countries with economies in transition and given ECE's positive record of operational activities. It is proposed that countries which do not have ECE on their list of eligible institutions for receiving funds for operational activities should now include it.

What should be done and why

28. The benefits of more predictable and sustained financing for operational activities are obvious: it would allow for a more strategic approach and more focussed planning. How to achieve this is less obvious; certainly, the proposal made in paragraph 27 above is an element. However more is necessary and the secretariat appeals to member countries to reflect on this issue and to provide constructive suggestions during the debate on this item.

29. For its part, the secretariat considers that the increased commitment and goodwill of donors to provide resources for ECE operational activities might be enhanced by better information on its available expertise, past achievements in operational activities, and potential new projects for funding. A booklet containing this information might help to disseminate such information among prospective donors. Moreover, as part of the planning process, the Coordinating Unit could prepare, as is done for donor conferences, a consolidated list of proposals which could be financed. Such lists would not in any way be a substitute for the individual fund-raising efforts carried out by staff involved in individual projects but would provide a view of the total number of funding proposals. Such lists could also be made available to the relevant Committees, the Commission and private sector partners in a more systematic way than is currently done.

VI. ECE'S MECHANISM AND STRUCTURE FOR OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES, THEIR MONITORING AND EVALUATION.

30. As stated above, the policy guidance provided by ECE's subsidiary bodies underpins many of ECE's operational activities. This is important as it allows ECE to adjust its activities to new policy objectives and Governments to monitor their realisation. It also allows for an updating and upgrading of the expertise needed for operational activities.

31. What is also needed, however, is better coordination of all these activities so as to maximize their impact. While the Plan of Action foresaw the Coordinating Unit's coordinating role on a "when necessary" basis, experience has shown that a more systematic approach is needed. Indeed, the Auditors recommended that ECE should strategically plan and monitor its operational activities as far as possible and that as a minimum a schedule of Regional Adviser missions should be maintained so as to exploit potential economies of scale and synergies.

32. The Coordinating Unit will therefore undertake this task in close cooperation with the Divisions. Henceforth, as is already done by some, each Regional Adviser will, under the guidance of the Director of the Division to which he/she is attached, establish a Work Plan for his/her activities which will clearly show the link between the proposed activities, the policy direction provided by PSBs and the broad orientations adopted by the Commission at its Annual Session on the basis of this note.

33. The Coordinating Unit will secure the consistency of these Work Plans with the orientations given by the Commission, monitor their implementation in consultation and cooperation with the Directors and suggest cross sectoral activities as appropriate.

34. It will also have a central role in fund-raising as discussed above and will also work with the divisions in fostering partnerships with other institutions.

35. The Coordinating Unit could also have a role in analysing why some countries are better able than others to apply the advice provided. This is linked to the whole question of feedback. In this connection, feedback from participants in operational activities such as workshops is often provided to policy makers in the various technical committees so as to facilitate decisions concerning future activities. However, such feedback could be more systematic so as to allow all concerned, including senior management and the Commission, the benefit of such information. This would greatly facilitate the evaluation of the impact of operational activities.

36. In future, ECE plans to undertake evaluations of its activities. The implementation of a system for this purpose will permit a more systematic assessment of the relevance and usefulness of ECE's work, including its operational activities.

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CORRIGENDUM
ИСПРАВЛЕНИЕ

The title of document E/ECE/1376 should read as follows:

ECE OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES: RETHINKING THE STRATEGY

Le titre du document E/ECE/1376 devrait se lire:

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Название документа E/ECE/1376 читать следующим образом:

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OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES: RE-THINKING THE STRATEGY

Note by the Executive Secretary

- This note supplements the information contained in document E/ECE/1376.
- Table 1 contains specific information on the activities of the Regional Advisers
- Table 2 provides a list of workshops, seminars, study tours, training courses and other meetings of an operational nature organized since March 1999 or planned to be organized. These include events organized directly by ECE and those to which ECE provided major contribution or support.
- Table 3 summarizes operational activities undertaken for subregional groupings/special initiatives/programmes.
- Table 4 presents operational activities in the Mediterranean.

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Table 1. Activities of the Regional Advisers

Country visited	Purpose
	ENERGY
Austria	- To service a Working Session on Energy at the SECI/ECE Conference on Priorities for the EU Stability Pact, 3-5 October 1999
Belarus	- To evaluate the implementation of the joint UNDP-ECE project on sustainable forestry management; to conduct a workshop on rational utilization of wood residue resources; to discuss with UNDP joint implementation of a new ECE project on energy efficiency investment project development for climate change mitigation, Minsk, Vitebsk, Gomel, Grodno, 8-18 June 1999 - To discuss with UNDP a joint project on wide utilisation of indigenous energy sources; to work on the joint UNDP-ECE project on sustainable forestry management; to speed up ratification of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change; to work on energy efficiency investment project development for climate change mitigation; Minsk, Zaslavl, Borovliany, Kedisko, 19-29 October 1999 - To prepare a final project report on sustainable forestry management; to elaborate proposal for the project on greenhouse gas emissions; to assist in preparing a plan for the project on energy efficiency investment project development for climate change mitigation; Minsk, 1-8 February 2000
Bulgaria	- To participate in a Workshop on promotion of investments in gas and oil interconnections in Southeastern Europe, 3-4 June 1999
Czech Republic	- To conduct a first preparatory meeting of the ECE /OECD Workshop on enhancing the environment by reforming energy pricing, to be held in the Czech Republic in June 2000; Prague, 29-30 April 1999
Kazakhstan	- To introduce to Kazakh authorities a new ECE project on energy efficiency investment project development for climate change mitigation, Almaty, 11-14 July 1999 - To discuss with UNDP joint implementation of the above project, Almaty, 21-23 November 1999
Kyrgyzstan	- To service the 2nd, 3rd and 4th Project Working Group (PWG) sessions of the SPECA project on rational use of energy and water resources of Central Asia, Bishkek, 8-9 July 1999, 18-19 November 1999 and 23-25 February 2000
Latvia	- To service a seminar on energy efficiency in the Baltic Sea region, Riga, 12-14 May 1999
Netherlands	- To participate in the second meeting of the "Friends of Chair" of the Working Group of Energy Charter Protocol on Energy Efficiency and Related Environmental Aspects, The Hague, 9-11 September 1999

Country visited	Purpose
Russian Federation	- To participate in the First International Trade Fair for Energy Saving Technology; to take part in the seminar on legal, regulatory and financing facilities of energy saving; to conduct the first meeting on a study within a project on energy efficiency and security in CIS countries; to discuss a new ECE project on energy efficiency investment project development for climate change mitigation, Moscow, 8-17 March 1999 - To take part in the International Conference on cooperation among the Black Sea countries; to conduct the second meeting on energy efficiency and security in CIS countries project, Lazarevskaia, Moscow, 21-28 April 1999 - To advise on energy conservation in Russia; to take part in the International Conference-Fair on Energy Saving: Business Partnership; to conduct the second meeting on the study within the project on energy efficiency and security in CIS countries, Moscow, Balakovo, 22-30 June 1999 - To identify two/three energy saving pilot projects for Norwegian involvement; to identify EEDZ in Russia within a new ECE project on energy efficiency investment project development for climate change mitigation; to discuss the study on energy efficiency and security in CIS countries, St.Petersburg, Moscow, 31 August-8 September 1999 - To launch a joint US Department of Energy/UN Foundation project on energy saving in Moscow Medical Academy, Moscow, 30 September-2 October 1999 - To assist in preparation of the study on energy efficiency and security in CIS countries, Moscow, Cheboksary, 24-30 November 1999 - To conduct the third meeting on the study within the project on energy efficiency and security in CIS countries; to discuss with UNDP joint implementation of the project on energy efficiency investment project development for climate change mitigation and to assist Russian experts in preparing a plan for the above project, Moscow, 9-15 February 2000
Ukraine	- To launch a new ECE project on energy efficiency investment project development for climate change mitigation in Ukraine and to visit Energy Efficiency Demonstration Zones; to elaborate a project document on greenhouse gas emissions for GIF financing, Kiev, Slavutich, Nikolaev, Dneprodzerzhinsk, Zaporozhye, Simferopol, 14-25 September 1999

Country visited	Purpose
	ENVIRONMENT
Austria	- To participate in the Workshop for the Danube Environment Fund/Facility, Vienna, 17-19 February 1999 - To co-chair the Conference "Organic farming in the EU-perspective for the 21st Century", Vienna, 26-30 May 1999 - To participate in the meeting of the International Commission for the Protection of Danube River and the Programme Management Task Force, Vienna, 11-13 June 1999 - To participate in preparation of the environmental part of the SECI/ECE Conference on Priorities for the EU Stability Pact, Vienna, 4-7 August 1999 - To participate in the above Conference, Vienna, 3-5 October 1999 - To participate in the follow-up meeting on ECE/SECI projects, Vienna, 4 November 1999 - To participate in the joint meeting on future cooperation between ECE, ICPDR, SECI, Vienna, 9-11 December 1999
Belgium	- To present the report "The Kosovo conflict - consequences for the environment and human settlements", Brussels, 27 October 1999
Bosnia and Herzegovina	- To participate in the Environmental Steering Committee for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sarajevo-Banja Luka, 1-3 March 1999 - To participate in the meeting of the Environmental Steering Committee, Sarajevo, 20-21 May 1999 - To participate in preparation of a transboundary ground water project between Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sarajevo, 10-11 November 1999 - To participate in the OSCE seminar on environmental impacts of armed conflicts; preparation of a training workshop for Bosnia and Herzegovina on environmental conventions, Sarajevo, 11-14 December 1999 - To prepare a project on the protection of ground waters in the Cetina catchment area, Mostar, 27-29 February 2000
Croatia	- To attend the Programme Management Task Force of the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River, Varazdin, 8 March 1999, and the Environmental Performance Review, Zagreb, 9-18 March 1999 - Preparation of a water project for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Zagreb, 1-4 July 1999 - To participate in preparation of a transboundary ground water project between Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, Zagreb, 7-9 November 1999 - To prepare a programme for the protection of the Adriatic water catchment areas, Zagreb, 8-10 February 2000
France	- To participate in the Workshop on Integrated Coastal Area Management (Mediterranean Action Plan), Toulon, 10-12 January 2000

Country visited	Purpose
Germany	- To discuss cooperation and funding of water projects with Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufban, Frankfurt, 21-22 April 1999 - To participate in the Working Group on Water Management and preparation of the Work Plan 2000-2003, Bonn, 16-17 September 1999 - To participate in the Conference "Sewerage charges in Europe", Berlin, 26 October 1999
Greece	- To participate in the Legal Task Force under the ECE Water Convention, Athens, 19-21 December 1999
Hungary	- To attend the Conference on "EU Environmental Requirements - Industrial and Regional Development", Budapest, 15-18 April 1999 - To participate in the International Conference on Public Participation, Budapest, 27 June-1 July 1999
Italy	- To participate in the preparatory meeting of the Second Conference of the Stability Pact Working Table II, Rome, 17-18 December 1999 - To prepare the programme for the protection of the Adriatic water catchment areas, Rome, 6-8 February 2000
Kyrgyzstan	- To participate in the 2nd and 3rd PWG sessions of the SPECA project on energy and water, Bishkek, 6-9 July and 16-19 November 1999
Latvia	- To participate in the Seminar on a transboundary water agreement for the Daugava river, Sigulda, 26-29 September 1999
Netherlands	- To assist the Avalon Foundation to prepare a project for environmental protection through investments in organic agriculture, Amsterdam, 20-21 April 1999 - To assist in preparation and fund-raising of water- and agriculture related project, Amsterdam, The Hague, 22-25 July 1999 - To prepare a pilot programme on transboundary ground waters; to prepare the ECE-CEI projects on organic farming, Lelystad, Amsterdam, 14-17 October 1999 - To participate in the Bureau meeting of the ECE Water Convention, The Hague, 1-3 December 1999 - To prepare the transboundary ground waters project and the programme for the protection of the Adriatic water catchment areas, Amsterdam, The Hague, 18-21 January 2000
Romania	- To attend a preparatory meeting for a SECI national seminar on financing municipal water and waste water projects in Romania, Bucharest, 8-11 April 1999 - To participate as facilitator/Chairman in the SECI/ECE Seminar "Private sector participation in water supply and sewerage service in Romania and Republic of Moldova", Bucharest, 17-18 June 1999

Country visited	Purpose
Romania (continued)	- To participate in the Project Preparation Committee conference for Romania and Bulgaria, Bucharest, 1-3 November 1999 - To participate in preparation of municipal water projects in Romania, Bucharest, 21-22 November 1999 - To participate in the meeting of the Programme Management Task Force of the ICPDR, Sinaia, 23-25 November 1999
Slovakia	- To participate as a speaker in the Conference "EU water management framework directive and Danubian countries", Bratislava, 21-23 June 1999
Slovenia	- To participate in the consultation on a programme for the protection of the Adriatic water catchment areas, Ljubljana, 7-8 December 1999
Switzerland	- To participate in the Crans-Montana Forum, 24-27 June 1999
The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	- To participate in the meeting on the Regional Environmental Reconstruction Plan for South East Europe, Skopje, 25-28 January 2000 - To participate in the Stability Pact Working Table II, Skopje, 9-11 February 2000
Ukraine	- To service the Environmental Performance Review Mission, Kiev, 18-20 May 1999
United Kingdom	- To participate as a speaker in the International Water Seminar on securing water rights and managing water scarcity and to prepare the work of the Legal Advisory Service under the Water Convention, Dundee, 8-13 June 1999
TRADE	
Albania	- To assist the Albanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs with the re-establishment of the National Trade Facilitation Committee (ALBAPRO), Tirana, 22-23 March 1999
Austria	- To participate in SECI Business Advisory Council meeting, Vienna, 5-8 May 1999 - To participate in meeting of SECIPRO and EUROPRO, Vienna, 26-28 May 1999 - To attend UNCITRAL session on arbitration, Vienna, 29 May-1 June 1999 - To participate in SECI/OSCE Coordination Meeting, Salzburg, 25-28 July 1999 - To accompany the Deputy Executive Secretary to an OSCE conference, Vienna, 21 September 1999 - To participate in the SECI/ECE Conference on Priorities for the EU Stability Pact, Vienna, 2-4 October 1999 - To participate in the UN Convention on the Transition Crime Ad hoc Group meeting, Vienna, 5-7 October 1999 - To participate in the Stability Pact Conference, Alpbach, 10-12 October 1999
Azerbaijan	- To participate in the seminar on the cooperation of SMEs with transitional corporations, Baku, 30 September 1999
Bangladesh	- To act as resource person at the ESCAP/ECE BOT Expert Group Meeting, Dhaka, 9-14 October 1999

Country visited	Purpose
Belgium	- To attend a Joint Terre Initiative/IPR meeting, Brussels, 12-15 February 1999 - To attend meetings with European Investment Bank and the World Bank on the Stability Pact and SECI Project, Brussels, 25-27 October 1999
Bulgaria	- To participate in UN/ECE BOT Group Roundtable at the South East Europe Economic Forum, Sofia, 18-20 October 1999
Czech Republic	- To discuss with speakers, sponsors and governments officials preparations for the UN/ECE REAG Conference, Prague, 7-9 April 1999 - To participate in the UN/ECE REAG Conference, Prague, 13-16 April 1999 - To prepare for a WP.5 Forum, Prague, 23-24 May 1999 - To attend the OSCE Economic Forum, Prague, 25-28 May 1999 - To attend the UN/ECE Conference and preparatory meeting for WP.5, Prague, 5-7 September 1999 - Consultations with Czech Minister of Competition, Prague and Brno, 9-10 September 1999 - To participate in the FITPRO Trade Facilitation workshop, Prague, 12-16 October 1999 - To participate in the CEI Summit Economic Forum, Prague, 3-6 November 1999 - To participate in the Forum on new trends in competition law and their implications for business, Brno, 28 November-1 December 1999
France	- Presentation at REAG Round Table Discussion, Cannes, 12-13 March 1999 - To attend the UN/EC BOT Group Meeting, Paris, 21 June 1999 - To attend the BOT Meeting, Paris, 24 September 1999
Greece	- To participate in the Thessaloniki Forum Conference, Thessaloniki, 9-11 May 1999 - To participate in the second meeting of the SECI Joint Cooperation Committee for Combatting Trans-Border Crime, Athens, 20-23 July 1999 - To participate in the SECI Trilateral Trade Facilitation meeting, Thessaloniki, 20-21 September 1999 - To participate in the Rebuilding Southeast Europe Economic and Business Summit, Thessaloniki, 31 October-3 November 1999
Hungary	- To participate in the SECI Business Advisory Council and SECIPRO meetings, Budapest, 12-14 December 1999
Italy	- To participate in an inaugural meeting of ItaliaPRO, Trieste, 9-10 March 1999 - To attend SECI Business Advisory Council meeting, Rome, 10-12 March 1999 - To participate in SECIPRO and SECI Business Advisory Council meetings, Rome, 11-12 March 1999 - To participate in the UN/ECE BOT Group Meeting, Milan, 22-23 March 1999 - To participate in EU Stability Pact Working Table II, Bari, 8-9 October 1999

Country visited	Purpose
Kazakhstan	- To participate in the PWG session of the SPECA project on development of transport infrastructure and cross-border facilitation, Almaty, 17-19 October 1999
Malta	- To discuss initial trade facilitation review for the Government of Malta, Valetta, 14-17 November 1999
Poland	- To attend the Conference "Bridging the Gaps", Warsaw, 9-13 May 1999 - To participate in a Seminar on Public/Private partnership, Warsaw, 17-19 November 1999
Romania	- To participate in a meeting of the SECI Project Group on Crime and Corruption, Bucharest, 21-23 April 1999 - To participate in signing of the SECI Charter for Regional Cooperation to Combat Crime and Corruption, Bucharest, 25-26 May 1999 - To participate in the third Preparatory Meeting of the SECI Joint Cooperation Committee, Bucharest, 15-18 September 1999
Slovenia	- To participate in the meetings with the Ministry of Foreign Economic Relations to establish national Trade Facilitation Committee, Ljubljana, 29 June-1 July 1999 - To participate in the SECIPRO and SECI Business Advisory Council meetings, Bled, 20-23 October 1999
The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	- To represent ECE and SECI at the Joint Albania-The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia Workshop on Investment Barriers, Skopje, 19-21 November 1999
Turkey	- To participate in the SECI Project Group Meeting on "Cooperation among Securities Markets", Istanbul, 11-13 July 1999 - To attend an OSCE Economic Summit, Istanbul, 8-10 November 1999
United Kingdom	- To attend first meeting of two IPR sub-groups, London, 15 February 1999 - To attend the Steering Group of the UN/ECE IPR Meeting, London, 21-23 February 1999 - To attend EBRD annual meeting, London, 16-19 April 1999 - To discuss sponsorship of IP Group (IFPI), Valuation (REAG) and Competition Law, and preparation of CEI Summit Meeting in November, London, 23-26 July 1999 - To attend a conference on infrastructure financing, London, 15-16 November 1999
USA	- To attend the WTO Ministerial Meeting, Seattle, 28 November-2 December 1999
TRANSPORT	
Austria	- To attend the SECI/ECE Conference on Priorities for the EU Stability Pact, Vienna, 2-4 October 1999
Bosnia and Herzegovina	- To review a draft transport legislation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sarajevo, February 2000

Country visited	Purpose
Bulgaria	- To prepare and conduct the fourth meeting of the SECI Group IV on transport infrastructure development along major international axis, Sofia, 25 May-2 June 1999 - To prepare the fifth meeting of the SECI Group IV on transport infrastructure development along major international axis, Sofia, 11-12 November 1999 - To conduct the above meeting, Sofia, 30 November-1 December 1999
Croatia	- To attend the meeting on the Adriatic-Ionian highway project in the framework of the Stability Pact, Dubrovnic, 17 January 2000
Georgia	- To participate in and make presentation on transport challenges in the Black Sea region at the Ministerial Round Table on BSEC at the Turn of the 21st Century, Tbilisi, 9-10 March 1999 - To meet with the Georgian Ministry of Transport, GIRCA and Customs Department concerning implementation of ECE legal instruments and the newly proposed border crossing at Kartsaki, Tbilisi, 11 March 1999 - To meet with the Georgian Ministry of Transport and GIRCA on the follow-up of the meeting of 11 March 1999, Tbilisi, 30 June 1999 - To attend the first meeting of the Steering Committee on the development of the Black Sea pan-European transport area (PETrA-BS), Tbilisi, 1-2 July 1999
Greece	- To attend the BSEC meeting of the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Thessaloniki, 24-28 October 1999
Italy	- To participate in the informal meeting of the EU Stability Pact Working Table II, Rome, 17 November 1999
Kazakhstan	- To attend the 2nd and 3rd PWG sessions of the SPECA project on development of transport infrastructure and cross-border facilitation, Astana, 7-8 June 1999 and Almaty, 17-20 October 1999
Turkey	- To attend the second meeting of the Steering Committee on development of the Black Sea pan-European transport area (PETrA-BS), Istanbul, Izmir, 25-26 November 1999 - To participate in the Working Group meeting on infrastructure of ports and their hinterland connections to corridors of the PETrA-BS, 3 February 2000
COORDINATING UNIT FOR OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES	
Armenia	- Consultations with Government officials and to participate in the workshop on the role of local and regional Government in enterprise creation, Yerevan, 17-19 March 1999
Azerbaijan	- To participate in the seminar on the cooperation of SMEs with transnational corporations, Baku, 30 September 1999
Belarus	- To advise on the development of the Belarus SME programme and attend inauguration of the best entrepreneurs, Minsk, 18 February 1999
Croatia	- To participate in the CEI-UN/ECE conference on women's entrepreneurship, Brijuni, 21-22 October 1999

Country visited	Purpose
Czech Republic	- To participate in the 2nd CEI Summit Economic Forum and to moderate a seminar on SME promotion, Prague, 4-6 November 1999
France	- To participate in the international conference on good practice in business incubation, Albi, 14-15 October 1999
Hungary	- Consultations with officials of the Ministry of Economy, Budapest, 26 March 1999 - Consultations on the CEI Summit Economic Forum 2000 with Government officials, Budapest, 13-14 September 1999 - To participate in the annual meeting of the Hungarian Engineering Academy and consultations in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on preparation of the 2000 CEI Summit Economic Forum, Balatonfüred, Budapest, 26 November-2 December 1999 - To participate in the CEI Committee of National Coordinators meeting; to discuss organizational matters of the CEI Summit Economic Forum 2000 with Government officials, Budapest, 27-28 January 2000
Kazakhstan	- To participate in the joint ECE/ESCAP training workshop on training of trainers in management of SMEs, Almaty, 11-14 May 1999 - To participate in the 2nd, 3rd and 4th PWG sessions of the SPECA project on development of transport infrastructure and cross-border facilitation, Astana, 4-9 June 1999 and Almaty, 17-20 October 1999 and 30-31 March 2000 - To participate in the Meeting of Deputy Foreign Ministers of SPECA member States, Almaty, 5-11 December 1999
Kyrgyzstan	- To participate in the 2nd, 3rd and 4th PWG sessions of the SPECA project on energy and water, Bishkek, 8-9 July 1999, 18-19 November 1999 and 23-25 February 2000
Republic of Moldova	- Advisory consultations with Government officials and to participate in the conference on the State and SME business, Chisinau, 27-30 April 1999
Russian Federation	- To attend a meeting of interregional association "Siberian Accord", Kemerovo, 14-18 January 1999 - To participate in the Conference on the issues of federalism in the Russian Federation, Kazan, 8-12 February 1999 - To participate in the Conference on adaptation of EU experience for SME support in Russia, Moscow, 31 March 1999 - To participate in the St. Petersburg Economic Forum, St. Petersburg, 15-18 June 1999 - Consultations with the CIS Secretariat, Moscow, 13-16 October 1999
Tajikistan	- To participate in the 1st, 2nd and 3rd PWG sessions of the SPECA project on international economic conference, Dushanbe, 16-23 May 1999, 22-26 November 1999 and 23-24 March 2000
Ukraine	- Consultations with the Ministry of Ecology, Kiev, 21-22 October 1999

Table 2. Workshops, seminars, study tours, training courses and other meetings of operational nature

Division	Title
Energy	Workshops/seminars 1. Workshops on the implementation of the EU Gas Directive, Szirak, Hungary, 1-4 March 1999, and Semmering, Austria, 5-7 October 1999 2. Workshop on energy efficiency demonstration zones, Moscow, Russian Federation, 10-13 March 1999 3. Workshop on energy efficiency standards and labels, Rome, Italy, 11-12 March 1999 4. Seminar on legal, regulatory and financing facilities for energy savings, Moscow, Russian Federation, 13-14 March 1999 5. The Mediterranean Gas Conference: Preparing for the Next Era, Palermo, Italy, 13-14 April 1999 6. Second workshop on energy efficiency and security in the CIS countries, Moscow, Russian Federation, 20-23 April 1999 7. Workshop on power engineering and symposium on lighting engineering, Maribor, Slovenia, 12-14 May 1999 8. Seminar on energy efficiency in the Baltic Sea region, Riga, Latvia, 12-14 May 1999 9. Seminar on energy efficiency investment development project co-financing, Washington, USA, 14 May 1999 10. Workshops on gas transportation and tariffs (GATE 2010), Geneva, Switzerland, 18 May and 30 September 1999 11. Seminar and study tour on clean coal technologies, Czech Republic, 3-5 June 1999 12. Workshop on promotion of investments in gas and oil interconnections in Southeastern Europe, Bulgaria, 3-4 June 1999 13. Workshop on rational utilization of wood residue resources for heat power production in Belarus, Minsk, Belarus, 10-11 June 1999 14. Conference on opening up of the gas and electricity markets in the ECE region, Prague, Czech Republic, 21-22 June 1999 15. Workshops on reconstruction of energy market in former Yugoslavia, Budapest, Hungary, 1 and 20 September 1999 16. Seminar on the restructuring of the coal and thermal power sectors including the ecological aspects, Ustron, Poland, 14-16 October 1999 17. Workshop on energy efficiency standards and labels, Brussels, Belgium, 25-26 October 1999

Division	Title
Energy (continued)	18. Workshop on gas contracting along the chain, Geneva, Switzerland, 27 October 1999 19. International conference on regional network for the efficient use of resources, Sofia, Bulgaria, 17-18 November 1999 20. International Conference on integration of Central and Eastern European countries into a wider gas market and East/West cooperation, Leipzig, Germany, 29-30 November 1999 21. Workshops on energy efficiency investment project development for climate change mitigation, Geneva, Switzerland, 13-14 January and 28-29 February 2000 Planned: 22. Seminar on energy savings, Moscow, Russian Federation, 13-16 March 2000 23. Mediterranean Gas and Power 2000 Conference: trade and convergence in a changing region, Tunis, 11-12 April 2000 24. ECE/OECD Workshop on enhancing the environment by reforming energy pricing, Pruhonice, Czech Republic, 14-16 June 2000 25. International conference on hybrid power systems for sustainable development, New York, USA, September 2000 Training course 1. Natural gas rate-making in the ECE region, Groningen, Netherlands, 14-19 March 1999
Environment	Workshops/seminars 1. Workshop on the significance of ECE policies and instruments for the sustainable development of Central Asian countries, Geneva, 15-16 March 1999 2. Workshop on modern cadastre, Bonn, Germany, March 1999 3. Workshop on critical levels for ozone, level II; Gerzensee, Switzerland, 11-15 April 1999 4. Workshop on sharing experience on the implementation of the Water Convention, Nizhni Novgorod, Russian Federation, 26 May 1999 5. Workshop on housing privatization, Cracow, Poland, 30 May-1 June 1999 6. International Water Seminar on securing water rights and managing water scarcity, Dundee, United Kingdom, 8-13 June 1999 7. Tenth Mapping Workshop, Prague, Czech Republic, 15-18 June 1999 8. Seminar on private sector participation in water supply and sewerage services in Romania and Republic of Moldova, Bucharest, Romania, 17-18 June 1999 9. Workshop on transboundary waters: enhancing cooperation and managing conflict, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, 7-9 July 1999

Division	Title
Environment (continued)	10. Seminar on housing condominiums, Moscow, Russian Federation, 22-24 July 1999 11. Workshop on river and lake commissions, Bonn, Germany, 13-14 Sept. 1999 12. Seminar on a transboundary water agreement for the Daugava river, Sigulda, Latvia, 26-29 September 1999 13. Workshop on managing and developing effective land registration and cadastre services, London, United Kingdom, September 1999 14. Seminar on the prevention of chemical accidents and limitations of their impact on transboundary waters, Hamburg, Germany, 4-6 October 1999 15. Second EMEP/WMO Workshop on data analysis and interpretation, Dubrovnik, Croatia, 4-8 October 1999 16. Workshop on heavy metals, Bad Harzburg, Germany, 12-15 October 1999 17. Seminar on flood prevention and protection, Berlin, Germany, 7-8 October 1999 18. Workshop on experience of countries with limited resources of water with increasing public awareness on water saving, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, 17-19 November 1999 19. Workshop on critical loads for acidity and eutrophication: criteria, concepts and biological indicators, Copenhagen, Denmark, 21-25 November 1999 20. EMEP/WMO Workshop on fine particles - emissions, modelling and measurements, Davos, Switzerland, 22-25 November 1999 21. WMO/EMEP MSC-E Workshop on modelling of atmospheric transport and deposition of persistent organic pollutants and mercury, Geneva, Switzerland, 1-3 December 1999 22. Workshop on management of transboundary lakes, Tartu, Estonia, mid-December 1999 23. Workshop on Integrated Coastal Area Management (Mediterranean Action Plan), Toulon, 10-12 January 2000 24. Workshop on housing finance, Timisoara, Romania, 30 January-1 February 2000 <u>Planned</u>: 25. ECE/OECD Workshop on enhancing the environment by reforming energy pricing, Pruhonice, Czech Republic, 14-16 June 2000 26. Workshop on urban renewal and housing modernization, Prague, Czech Republic, 2000 27. Workshop on sustainable consumption patterns, 2001 <u>Training course</u> 1. Training course on points of contact under Industrial Accidents Convention, Moscow (Noginsk), Russian Federation, 7-8 June 1999

Division	Title
Statistics	Workshops/seminars 1. Joint ECE/Eurostat workshop on statistical data confidentiality, Thessaloniki, Greece, 8-10 March 1999 2. Workshop on gender statistics for Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation and Ukraine, Minsk, Belarus, 12-17 March 1999 3. Workshop on gender statistics for the Central Asian and Caucasus countries, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 4-9 April 1999 4. Workshop on gender statistics for CEES and Baltic countries, Bled, Slovenia, 17-19 April 1999 5. Seminar on census data collection experience for CIS and Baltic countries, Moscow, Russian Federation, 12-16 May 1999 6. Workshop on statistical data editing, Rome, Italy, 4-6 June 1999 7. Workshop on poverty measurement for CEES and Baltic countries, Vilnius, Lithuania, 3-7 July 1999 8. Workshop of the task force on the census project, Geneva, Switzerland, 30 July 1999 9. Workshop on statistical metadata, Geneva, Switzerland, 22-24 September 1999 10. Workshop on poverty measurement for all CIS countries, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, 27-30 September 1999 11. Workshop on census data analysis, presentation, etc. for all CIS and Baltic countries, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 25-29 October 1999 12. Workshop on social statistics reporting for CEES and Baltic countries, Bled, Slovenia, 3-5 December 1999 Planned: 13. ECE/Eurostat/ILO Seminar on Measurement of the Quality of Employment, Geneva, Switzerland, 3-5 May 2000 14. Seminar on Integrated Statistical Information Systems and Related Matters, ISIS 2000, Riga, Latvia, 29-31 May 2000 Training courses 1. Census data processing, Kiev, Ukraine, 7-9 May 1999 2. Training/study tour of Moldavian experts on census data entry, Minsk, Belarus, 31 August-5 September 1999 3. Census data processing and assistance, Tbilisi, Georgia, 17-18 September 1999 4. Census data processing and assistance, Chisinau, Republic of Moldova, 13-18 October 1999

Division	Title
Trade	Workshops/seminars 1. Seminar on analysis, methodology of treatment and remediation of contaminated soils, Paris, France, 13-15 April 1999 2. Workshop on implementation and use of international standards, Geneva, Switzerland, 18 May 1999 3. Workshop on radioactive contaminated metallurgical scrap, Prague, Czech Republic, 26-28 May 1999 4. Seminar on forest operations of tomorrow, Pessac, France, 20-24 September, 1999 5. Seminar on administrative issues at customs check points and their impact on the development of inter Arab States trade, Cairo, Egypt, 25-27 September 1999 6. FITPRO Trade Facilitation workshop, Prague, Czech Republic, 12-16 October 1999 7. Seminar on electronic commerce in emerging countries: issues and development policies, Marrakech, 11-12 November 1999 8. Seminar on Public/Private partnership, Warsaw, Poland, 17-19 November 1999 9. Joint Albania-The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia Workshop on Investment Barriers, Skopje, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, 19-21 November 1999 10. Workshop on sustainable development and certification in the Russian forest industries, St.Petersburg, Russian Federation, 12-15 December 1999 11. Trade and investment promotion from a local and regional perspective, Geneva, Switzerland, 2-3 March 2000 Planned: 12. Workshop on the use of ISO 14000 Environmental Management Standards in the chemical industry in the ECE region, Budapest, Hungary, 30-31 March 2000 13. Workshop on forestry information systems, Hyytiälä, Finland, 15-20 May 2000 14. Workshop on sustainable development of marketing of wood and non-wood forest products and services for central and east European countries, Chisinau, Republic of Moldova, 16-20 May 2000 15. Seminar on practical aspects of eliminating obstacles to efficient trade finance in transition economies, Riga, Latvia, 1-2 June 2000 16. Workshop on new trends in harvesting with cable cranes, Ossiach, Austria, 11-17 June 2000 17. Seminar on competitiveness in industry: trends in steel consumption-responding to market needs, Budapest, Hungary, 11-12 September 2000

Division	Title
Trade (continued)	18. Seminar on harvesting of non-wood forest products in the Mediterranean region, Manemen, Turkey, 2-8 October 2000 19. Workshop on harmonization of technical legislation, Turkey, 2000 20. Seminar on women in forestry, Lisbon, Portugal, March/April 2001 21. Second seminar on analysis, methodology of treatment and remediation of contaminated soils, Paris, France, April 2001 22. Seminar on public relations and environmental education in forestry, Switzerland, September/October 2001 23. Seminar on afforestation techniques, Ireland, September 2002 Study tours 1. Forest and forest industries study tour in Ireland, Ireland, 5-11 September 1999 Planned: 2. Study tour in Canada on certification of sustainable forest management in forests and forest industries, eastern Canada, September 2000 3. Study tour of the steel industry of China, 15-22 October 2000 4. Study tour of the steel industry of Poland, September 2001
Transport	Workshops/seminars 1. Seminar on User Charges for Railway Infrastructure, Germany, July 1999 2. Workshop on Geographical Information Systems in Transport, Geneva, Switzerland, 15-16 November 1999 Planned: 3. Workshop on assistance to victims of road accidents within the framework of the Third Road Safety Week, Hungary, May 2000 4. Workshop on Extension of TERM Project to ECE Countries in Transition, 2000 Training courses 1. Training course on implementation of TER data bank, Maribor, Slovenia, 1-4 March 1999 2. TEMSTAT training course, Vilnius, Lithuania, 7-9 April 1999 3. Railway traffic forecasting, calculation, analyses and assessments based on exercise, Budapest, Hungary, 14-16 July 1999

Division	Title
Coordinating Unit for Operational Activities	Workshops/seminars 1. Workshop on the Role of Local and Regional Government in Enterprise Creation, Yerevan, Armenia, 18-19 March 1999 2. Seminar on Best Practice in Development of Entrepreneurship and SMEs in CITs: the Czech Experience, Geneva, Switzerland, 2 June 1999 3. Expert Meeting on Best Practice in Business Incubation, Geneva, Switzerland, 3-4 June 1999 4. Seminar on Cooperation of SMEs with Transnational Corporations, Baku, Azerbaijan, 30 September 1999 5. Conference on Women's Entrepreneurship - East-West Cooperation, Brijuni, Croatia, 21-22 October 1999 6. Seminar on SME promotion, Prague, Czech Republic, 4-6 November 1999 7. Seminar on Organizational Assistance, Support Measures and Credit Facilities for SMEs, Tel-Aviv, Israel, 27-29 February 2000 Planned: 8. International Seminar on Best Practice in Simplification of the SME Legal Environment, Maribor, Slovenia, 9-10 March 2000 9. Workshop on Environment Protection and SMEs, Baku, Azerbaijan, 30-31 March 2000 10. International Conference on the Investment Climate for Developing Renewable Energy Sources in Central Asia, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, 18-19 May 2000 11. Workshop on the Role of Micro Credits, Guarantee Funds and Small Scale Credit Institutions, Bulgaria, May 2000 12. International Conference on Technology Transfer for Economic Development: Experience for Countries in Transition, Zagreb, Croatia, 19-20 June 2000 13. Workshop on technology transfer and SMEs, Athens, Greece, October 2000 14. Expert Meeting on Best Practice in Business Advisory, Counselling and Information Services, Geneva, 2-3 November 2000 15. Workshop on SMEs - Standardization and Quality Assurance as Technical Requirements for Manufacturing, Services and Trade, Georgia, November 2000 Training course 1. Joint ECE/ESCAP Training Workshop on Training of Trainers in Management of SMEs for Central Asian and Caucasian Transition Economies, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 11-14 May 1999

Table 3. Operational activities undertaken for subregional groupings/special initiatives/programmes

Subregional groupings/ special initiatives/ programmes	Activities
Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC)	- Substantive contribution to the International Round Table: BSEC at the Turn of the 21st Century on economic developments in the ECE region and challenges for the BSEC countries, BSEC overall programme of work and strategies; and on transport challenges in the Black Sea region (Tbilisi, Georgia, 9-10 March 1999); BSEC Working Group on Transport (Greece, 11-12 October 1999); and the meeting of the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs (Greece, 27 October 1999) - Joint organization of workshops on SMEs: role of local and regional Government in enterprise creation (Baku, Armenia, 18-19 March 1999). Four more workshops on SMEs related issues are planned: environment protection and SME (Azerbaijan, 30-31 March 2000); micro credits, guarantee funds and small-scale credit institutions (Bulgaria, May 2000); technology transfer and SME (Greece, October 2000); and SMEs and standardization , quality assurance (Georgia, November 2000) - A review of the energy efficiency developments in the countries of the BSEC region was prepared for a meeting of Energy Ministers in Georgia
Central European Initiative (CEI)	- ECE/CEI cooperation was reviewed at the joint informal meeting (Geneva, 10-11 May 1999). Cooperation Agreement and MoU signed in May 1998 were considered valid. More emphasis should be given to the cooperation that will lead to reinforcement of peace and stability in the CEI region - Identification, collection and preparation of project ideas and proposals for presenting to international and local financial institutions have continued. These proposals and ideas are also regularly presented at other CEI meetings including meetings of CEI Committee of National Coordinators - The following areas were identified for further work: real estate markets; business incubators; enterprise development; gender issues and women advancement; standards in fresh fruit and vegetables; organic agriculture; micro-financing; banking and SMEs; business advisory services; new investment needs and opportunities; etc.

Subregional groupings/ special initiatives/ programmes	Activities
Central European Initiative (CEI) (continued)	- Support and substantive contribution was made to the CEI Summit Economic Forum and Summit of CEI Heads of Government (Prague, 3-6 November 1999). ECE staff actively participated in panels, seminars and round tables held during the Forum. ECE materials on various issues of interest to EIT were distributed at the ECE stand - Proposals for support measures by governments, regional and local authorities and financial institutions to promote women entrepreneurship in CEI countries were elaborated and presented by ECE at the ECE/CEI/OECD Conference on Women's Entrepreneurship: East-West Cooperation (Brjuni, Croatia, 21-22 October 1999) - Preparation of the network of the SME national focal points
Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)	- Cooperation between ECE and the CIS secretariat was discussed in October 1999 in the light of the restructuring of CIS and its governing bodies in order to prepare ground for the forthcoming meeting of the ECE Executive Secretary and the Chairman of the Executive Committee and Executive Secretariat of the CIS planned for February 2000 - Participation in the CIS meeting of standardization agencies (Armenia, October 1999). Interstate Council on Standardization, Certification and Metrology asked ECE to assist in the organization of a CIS Quality Centre in Minsk. External funding is being sought - Project on energy efficiency and security in CIS has been implemented: two meetings of the group of experts and a workshop were held in Moscow (April 1999) and Geneva (November 1999); three meetings on the study on energy conservation as a factor in increasing the energy security in member States of CIS were held in Moscow in March and June 1999, and February 2000 - Seminar on census data collection experience for CIS and Baltic countries was held in Moscow on 12-16 May 1999 - Cooperation with the Interstate Euro-Asian Coal and Metals Community on the issues of technical cooperation in the utilization of methane gas in the coal mines for the production of electricity

Subregional groupings/ special initiatives/ programmes	Activities
Southeast European Cooperative Initiative (SECI)	- Implementation of the following projects is under way: (a) Trade facilitation - actions to overcome border crossing difficulties (lead country - Greece) (b) Transport infrastructure - identification of bottlenecks along main international corridors in the SECI region and short-term measures to remove them (lead country - Bulgaria) (c) Financial policies to promote SMEs through microcredit and credit guarantee schemes (lead country - Romania) (d) Energy efficiency demonstration zones network in southeast Europe (lead country - Hungary) (e) Interconnection of natural gas networks, diversification of gas supply and improvement of security of supply in southeast Europe (lead country - Bosnia and Herzegovina) (f) Recovery programme for rivers, lakes and adjacent seas (lead country - Austria) (g) Interconnection of electricity grids (lead country - The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) (h) Cooperation among security markets (lead country -Turkey) (i) Combatting cross-border crime and corruption (lead country - Romania) - Implementation of these projects is regularly reviewed at the meetings of the Agenda Committee and Business Advisory Council. ECE's contribution to the implementation of the projects consisted of the following activities: preparation of project outlines for the Agenda Committee; further elaboration of these outlines for meetings of the working groups; securing the cooperation of other UN bodies and agencies as requested by the Coordinator; provision of advisory services and organization of workshops within available resources; regular consultations with the Coordinator and direct reporting to the Agenda Committee. For each project, several project group meetings have been held. The ECE secretariat contributed to the organization of these meetings, prepared background documents and final reports. - Efforts have been made to secure financial support for the projects and the involvement of the business community in their implementation - Participation in meetings on the EU Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe, in particular its Working Table II on Economic Reconstruction, Development and Cooperation

Subregional groupings/ special initiatives/ programmes	Activities
Southeast European Cooperative Initiative (SECI) (continued)	- Preparation and updating of consolidated list of priority projects of the SECI Participating States for implementing the Stability Pact. It contains projects of small scale and short duration with a starting date in early 2000 (list A) and longer term projects with substantial resource requirements (list B) in the fields of transport, energy efficiency, electricity interconnection, natural gas and environment. The implementation of these projects may start as soon as necessary finance is secured
Special Programme for Economies of Central Asia (SPECA)	- Preparation for the official presentation of the programme to the world community and elaboration of concept paper and scenario of its presentation for discussion at the meeting of Deputy Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Central Asian countries (Almaty, 8-9 December 1999). The official presentation is expected to be held in the first half of 2000 - Contribution to the sessions of Project Working Groups (PWG) under the following projects: (a) transport infrastructure and border crossing facilitation - PWG-Transport: Almaty (June, October 1999 and March 2000) (b) rational and efficient use of energy and water resources - PWG-Energo: Bishkek (July, November 1999, February 2000) (c) international economic conference - PWG-Tajikistan: Dushanbe (May, November 1999, March 2000) - The other two projects included in the programme with Turkmenistan (regional cooperation in developing a multi-choice approach to hydrocarbon supply routes through pipelines to the world markets) and Uzbekistan (industrial restructuring with a view to creating internationally competitive manufacturing industries) as lead countries are at early stages of their implementation - Preparation and submission of projects (a) and (b) for financing under the UN Development Account. In December 1999, the UN General Assembly approved the amount of US$ 1.75 million for the 2000-2001 biennium under project (b)

Table 4. Operational activities in the Mediterranean

Activities
- At its last session, the Commission recognized that ECE's efforts in the Mediterranean had very often failed because of lack of financial resources and, therefore, additional efforts should be made to mobilize resources with a view to responding to the specific circumstances and needs of the Commission's Mediterranean countries. In response to that request, the Executive Secretary invited Governments of the Mediterranean member countries of ECE, ESCWA and ECA to consider possibilities of pursuing joint activities for the benefit of these countries. This issue was discussed at the meeting of the Executive Secretaries of these commissions in New York where the idea was welcomed.
- Operational activities in the Mediterranean region continued in the field of energy, SMEs, forest industries and statistics. In cooperation with the Italian oil and gas companies, the ECE Gas Centre organised the Mediterranean Gas Conference: Preparing for the Next Era, in Palermo, Italy on 13-14 April 1999. Preparations are under way for the next Mediterranean Gas and Power 2000 Conference: Trade and Convergence in a Changing Region, to be held in Tunis on 11-12 April 2000, organized in cooperation with the Tunisian Ministry of Industry and the Tunisian electricity and gas company. A Seminar on organizational assistance, support measures and credit facilities for SMEs was organized by the Israeli Institute and the Small Business Authority of Israel on behalf of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Israel in cooperation with ECE in Tel Aviv (Israel) on 27-29 February 2000. A seminar on harvesting of non-wood forest products in the Mediterranean region will be held in Manemen (Turkey) on 2-8 October 2000. ECE participated in the Workshop on Integrated Coastal Area Management (Mediterranean Action Plan) in Toulon (France) on 10-12 January 2000.
- In 1999, at the request of Eurostat, a staff member of the Statistical Division with expertise in the field of international migration statistics served as a Trainer and Resource Person in three training workshops on international migration statistics that Eurostat and CESD-Roma organized under Eurostat's MEDSTAT-Migration project for countries in the Mediterranean region. The training workshops were organized in Valetta (Malta), Ramallah and Tunis for the following 12 recipient countries/territories: Algeria, Cyprus, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Malta, Morocco, Palestinian Authority, Syria, Tunisia and Turkey. Eurostat has asked the ECE to provide additional support of this kind to the project in the coming year. All expenses for the ECE staff member concerned are paid by Eurostat's MEDSTAT-Migration project.
- ECE has received several suggestions for cooperation on various topics which are under consideration by the secretariat. Among them the following areas are mentioned: agriculture, energy, environment, training, transport and customs, statistics (Italy); air pollution, energy efficiency, trade facilitation (Malta); agriculture, energy, environment including water, legislation, free trade, transport (Turkey).

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INTERSECTORAL ACTIVITIES AND CROSS-SECTORAL CONCERNS, IN PARTICULAR THE INVOLVEMENT OF THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY IN ECE ACTIVITIES

Note by the Executive Secretary

- This note reviews the ECE intersectoral activities, highlighting progress made on the follow-up to the Vienna Ministerial Conference on Transport and Environment and, more recently, to the London Charter on Transport, Environment and Health. The Commission may wish to acknowledge the on-going efforts as proposed in paragraph 13 below.

- It also reviews progress made in ECE's relationship with the business community as one of the cross-sectoral concerns identified by the Plan of Action and raises a number of issues relating to principles which should govern such cooperation, namely mutual benefits, promotion of the UN development agenda, prevention of unfair comparative advantage and equal access to ECE's public goods. The Commission may wish to take appropriate action to address these issues as suggested in paragraphs 23 and 24 below.

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1. This report responds to a request contained in the Plan of Action, as well as to that of the Ad Hoc Working Group established to consider issues related to the involvement of the business community in ECE activities as a cross-sectoral concern. In addition, it provides information on developments in intersectoral activities.

I. DEVELOPMENTS IN INTERSECTORAL ACTIVITIES

Transport and Environment

2. Transport and environment is at present the most developed intersectoral activity within the ECE. Since the last session of the Commission, significant progress has been achieved on the follow-up to the Vienna Ministerial Conference on Transport and the Environment. Furthermore, the ECE is involved in the follow-up to the Charter on Transport, Environment and Health adopted at the Third Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health (London, June 1999).

(a) Follow-up to the Vienna Conference

3. The number of National Focal Points (NFPs) has steadily increased: 44 ECE member States have now appointed a NFP, either in the Ministry of Transport (12) or in the Ministry of Environment (20), or in both (10), or in other ministries (2). As a result, the exchange of information on issues covered by the Vienna Programme has significantly expanded. The network also includes those organizations and countries which are Lead Actors for international activities contained in the Programme of Joint Action (POJA) adopted in Vienna. Taking advantage of the transport and environment page set up on the ECE website and linkages established with the focal points and lead actors, other experts in this field can contact the latter and provide information on their own projects, thereby strengthening the evolutive and interactive character of the system.

4. The second Joint Meeting on Transport and the Environment (JMTE) was held in June 1999. It reviewed reports on national and international activities and requested the secretariat to convene a meeting of the national focal points, international lead actors and other experts in order to identify key priorities in the POJA based on long-term regional objectives and technical and scientific developments, to establish a revolving work plan and to prepare the 2002 mid-term review.

5. The meeting of national focal points took place on 7-8 February 2000 in Geneva. Its main task was to discuss three documents which are expected to become basic tools for the follow-up of the Vienna process. The first gives an overview of the activities and projects of member States, at

the national level. The second identifies priorities for international activities. The third outlines a draft work plan for the period July 2000-July 2001 for the implementation of the POJA at the international level.

6. The meeting agreed on ways to improve the format of these documents and the methodology for priority setting. It felt that it was important to regularly update and develop them with a view to identifying issues of common concern among countries, indicating potential areas for cooperation, adjusting priorities and facilitating the establishment of work plans on transport and environment. The documents are being revised and will be submitted to the third Joint Meeting on Transport and the Environment to take place on 6 June 2000. The meeting also established a table describing specific expertise that countries and organizations can offer, or wish to receive, in the field of transport and the environment. This table will be developed according to further information which member countries, international organizations and non-governmental organizations will provide.

7. Finally, the meeting made proposals on the setting up of a joint ad hoc expert group on transport and the environment to be attached to the JMTE, and on the preparation of the 2002 Mid-Term Review of the POJA. Subsequently, these proposals were endorsed by the annual session of the Inland Transport Committee and the Bureau of the Committee on Environmental Policy. They will be submitted next June to the JMTE for decision.

(b) Follow up to the London Charter on Transport, Environment and Health

8. The Charter refers several times to the Vienna Conference and states that linkages must be established between the two processes, in particular through cooperation between WHO and the ECE, for a coordinated follow-up and implementation. Furthermore, it calls on WHO and ECE to:

> "provide an overview of relevant existing agreements and legal instruments, with a view to improving and harmonizing their implementation and further developing them as needed. A report on this overview should be submitted at the latest by spring 2000, recommending which further steps are needed. That report should cover the possibility of new non-legally binding actions and the feasibility, necessity and content of a new legally binding instrument (e.g. a convention on transport, environment and health), focusing on bringing added value to, and avoiding overlaps with, existing agreements."

9. Following this decision, a draft inventory of legal instruments relevant for transport, environment and health was prepared by a group of consultants, under the guidance of the ECE

and WHO secretariats, with the financial support of the Government of Denmark. Another document was prepared by the ECE secretariat, outlining political targets and objectives for transport, environment and health as contained in the Vienna Declaration, the POJA, the London Declaration and the Charter.

10. A joint ECE/WHO session took place on 9 February 2000 to review the two documents. It was agreed that they should be completed in the light of the discussion and that further comments could be received from those member States, international organizations and NGOs which are interested in providing views for the finalization of the report.

11. These interested stakeholders were also invited to provide their views on the identification of gaps between existing instruments and political targets as well as on the preparation of relevant recommendations. The revised draft report will be examined at a meeting in mid-April, after which the WHO and ECE secretariats will further elaborate recommendations while continuing consultations with the group of interested stakeholders.

12. A joint WHO/ECE session will take place on 7 June 2000 where a new revised draft will be presented in order to receive the last comments. The two secretariats will subsequently finalize the report and submit it to a high level meeting of transport, environment and health officers to be convened by the end of 2000 in order to take decisions on the recommendations outlined in the report.

13. The Commission may wish to express its appreciation for the priority given to transport and environment by the Inland Transport Committee, the Committee on Environmental Policy and their respective Bureaux. It may also wish to encourage the Joint Meeting on Transport and the Environment to actively pursue the overall monitoring and implementation of the Programme of Joint Action.

Energy and Environment

14. Under the impact of growing environmental concerns about energy production and use, the Committee on Sustainable Energy reviewed its programme of work in 1997 to give more emphasis to issues relating to the sustainable development and use of energy. At its last session in November 1999, the Committee discussed the barriers that currently exist in integrating energy and environmental policies, the need to create new interdisciplinary linkages and attitudes in policy-making, and to establish an equity approach (balance between conflicting interests and objectives).

15. The Committee also approved a number of supportive actions at the regional level, to support the preparations leading up to the annual session of the Commission on Sustainable Development in 2001 (CSD-9) which will be devoted to energy and environmental issues. For this purpose, an Intergovernmental Task Force was established to guide ECE's contribution to CSD-9, to identify the key regional energy sustainability issues and then to promote the implementation of the outcome of CSD-9 in the ECE region. A High-level Multi-stakeholder Forum on Forging Partnerships in a Competitive Energy Market will also be organized in conjunction with the annual session of the Committee on Sustainable Energy in November 2000.

16. While these activities are being conducted under the auspices of the Committee on Sustainable Energy, they will be coordinated with relevant work and activities of the Committee on Environmental Policy. Moreover, the legal instruments developed under the auspices of the Committee on Environmental Policy and its subsidiary bodies will be highlighted and promoted.

II. INVOLVEMENT OF THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY IN ECE ACTIVITIES

17. The Ad Hoc Group of Experts on Relations with the Business Community requested all PSBs to review their cooperation with the business community. The PSBs have taken up this issue in their annual meetings. The presentation below synthesizes the findings in accordance with the guidance provided by the Ad Hoc Group, namely: areas of ECE activities where the business community is involved; how the business community is participating in these activities; breakthrough in furthering the relationship with the business community; difficulties encountered; and conclusions.

Areas of involvement

18. The review shows that the business community is involved in most areas of work of ECE and in particular in the activities related to the following intergovernmental bodies of ECE:

Transport

- Inland Transport Committee
- World Forum for Harmonization of Vehicle Regulations (formerly the Working Party on the Construction of Vehicles)
- Working Party on Road Traffic Safety
- Working Party on Customs Questions Affecting Transport
- Working Party on Inland Water Transport
- Working Party on Combined Transport
- Working Party on the Transport of Perishable Foodstuffs

Working Party on Road Transport
Working Party on the Transport of Dangerous Goods

Trade, Industry and Enterprise Development
Committee on Trade, Industry and Enterprise Development
Centre for Facilitation of Procedures and Practices for Administration, Commerce and Transport (CEFACT)
Working Party on International Legal and Commercial Practice and its related sub-groups (Real Estate Advisory Group, BOT Group, Group on the implementation of intellectual property rights)
Working Party on Technical Harmonization and Standardization Policies
Working Party on Standardization of Perishable Produce and Quality Development
Ad Hoc Group of Experts on Steel
Ad Hoc Group of Experts on the Chemical Industry

Energy
Committee on Sustainable Energy and related ad hoc groups of experts
Working Party on Gas
Gas Centre
Steering Committee of the Energy Efficiency 2000 Project and its related expert groups

Timber
Teams of specialists attached to the Timber Committee

Human settlements
Committee on Human Settlements
Working Party on Land Administration (MOLA)
Housing and Urban Management Advisory Network (HUMAN)

Types of participation

19. The involvement of the business community in ECE activities takes four main forms:

(a) Participation in national delegations, either as mandated government representatives or as advisers. This is the case, for example, in those ECE bodies which focus on norm- and standard-setting, such as CEFACT and the Working Party on Standardization of Perishable Produce and Quality Development.

(b) Participation through representation in the delegations of international non-governmental organizations such as chambers of commerce, union of producers and other international professional associations. These non-governmental organizations can influence the norm- and standard-setting process through their expertise and practices (e.g. Organisation internationale des constructeurs automobiles (OICA) in WP.29) and/or provide their views on various issues debated in ECE bodies (e.g. International Chamber of Commerce on business promotion and the International Gas Union on the development of supply and demand of gas in the region).

(c) Participation as individual firms in specific events such as forums, round tables, training workshops and study tours.

(d) Participation in the preparation of studies e.g. Annual review of the steel market, Annual market review of forest products, and Study on underground gas storage.

Benefits

20. ECE cooperation with the business community has to be based on mutual benefits and interest. Along this line, the following can be highlighted:

(a) For ECE:

(i) In their deliberations for setting norms and standards within ECE, all countries benefit from the technical expertise and experience of the business community in the sector concerned.

(ii) Countries with economies in transition benefit from the expertise, technology, advice of and contacts with the business community for:

- developing an economic and legal environment conducive to increased trade, investment and enterprise development.
- capacity building and training for the implementation of ECE norms and standards and of policy guidelines related to sectoral reforms and to trade, investment and business practices on market terms.

In addition, they also benefit from financial support for seminars, study tours and other projects contributing to such capacity building and training.

(b) For the business community:

(i) It benefits from increased investment and trade opportunities in economies in transition through its contribution to the development of an orderly regulatory environment.

(ii) Sectoral constituencies within the business community can share their concerns and make proposals in norm- and standard-setting work. At the same time, they keep abreast of the evolution of their sectors, thereby enabling firms to make appropriate investment planning and to maintain a competitive edge.

(iii) It can benefit from ECE networks and forums to gain greater access to governments, in particular through contacts with officials in the relevant Ministries of ECE member States.

(iv) It can also develop contacts among members of the business community and with ECE networks of experts, thereby increasing the opportunity for business expansion.

Breakthrough

21. In the last few years, the following breakthrough in ECE's partnership with the business community can be outlined:

(a) Extension of CEFACT. The number of groups and the network of national trade facilitation bodies working under CEFACT have significantly expanded. These groups and bodies involve a large number of private sector associations and technical experts that have a leading role in developing EDIFACT norms and language. In total it is estimated that several thousands of experts are involved in the work worldwide.

(b) Increased participation of enterprises in forums and training events for countries with economies in transition (e.g. Forum on Intellectual Property Rights, training seminars within the framework of Energy Efficiency 2000).

(c) Development of new private-public partnerships. Two self-financed advisory groups, consisting of private and public sector experts, have been formed. These are the Build, Operate and Transfer Group (BOT group) and the Real Estate Advisory Group (REAG) with the

objectives of formulating guidelines, respectively, on Build, Operate and Transfer (BOT) financing techniques and on the promotion of real estate markets in central and eastern Europe.

(d) Establishment of the Housing and Urban Management Advisory Network (HUMAN). The network brings together experts from private business, financial institutions, NGOs, professional associations, research institutions and local authorities. It advises the Committee on Human Settlements on housing, planning and land administrations issues, and facilitates the transfer of knowledge and know-how to economies in transition in these areas.

(e) ECE is second among international organizations in Geneva for the number of hits received on the ECE web site. While it is difficult to identify their origin, it is very likely that the majority of enquiries originate from enterprises seeking information on conventions, norms, standards and other ECE activities of interest to them.

Difficulties

22. The following difficulties have emerged from the review:

(a) The private sector often finds UN financial regulations and procedures too complex, lengthy and rigid, and it is therefore is reluctant to contribute resources.

(b) The business community sometimes also feels that, because of its heavy structure and intergovernmental decision-making process, the UN mode of functioning is slow and has difficulties in adapting to new developments and initiating actions accordingly.

(c) In spite of the significant progress in information dissemination through electronic means, some ECE products (such as recommendations from workshops and seminars, or lessons from study tours) still have some difficulty in going beyond the traditional ECE constituencies and reaching the business community at large.

(d) While a larger involvement of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in ECE activities is desirable, this faces a number of obstacles, in particular SMEs' weak or non-existent representation in business associations having access to the UN, as well as their lack of finance, personnel and time for such participation.

Issues for further action by the relevant ECE bodies:

23. Taking into account the views expressed so far, it appears that ECE cooperation with the business community has progressed well and that both sides are keen to develop it further. However, in view of the above-mentioned difficulties, careful attention should be paid to the following issues:

(a) Ensuring a real partnership whereby the business community benefits from its participation and at the same time contributes to the economic development of countries with economies in transition. For example, the business community should be requested to provide more financial support to seminars, workshops and other training activities as a contribution to the dissemination and implementation of conventions, norms and standards in these countries.

(b) Ensuring that the business community's cooperation is limited to activities which are in line with and promote the basic UN principles, conventions and norms for better quality of life and social and environmental sustainability. Specific criteria could be developed for identifying such types of activities according to the nature of the areas concerned.

(c) Promoting equal access by enterprises to ECE's public goods - information, region-wide forums, and norms and standards - thereby minimizing the risk that firms already dominant in the market of their sector are given a further comparative advantage. For this purpose, steps could be taken to increase representation of SMEs in ECE activities and to ensure the dissemination of ECE products among the widest possible range of business constituencies.

(d) Speeding up the process of taking decisions on new initiatives such as the establishment of public-private advisory groups. One possibility would be to entrust the Bureaux of the PSBs to take such decisions provided they are in compliance with guidelines to be agreed by the relevant PSBs.

24. The Commission may wish to encourage the PSBs to pursue their cooperation with the private sector, addressing in particular the recommendations made in paragraph 23 above. Conclusions and proposals resulting therefrom should subsequently be reported to the Ad Hoc Working Group on Relations with the Business Community.

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CONTRIBUTING TO GLOBAL DEBATES AND EVENTS

Note by the Executive Secretary

In its resolution 1998/46, the Economic and Social Council recognized the dual role of the regional commissions as regional outposts of the United Nations and as part of their respective institutional landscape. With regard to the former, ECOSOC stressed the importance of linking more effectively the activities of the commissions with the overall activities of the Organization in the economic and social sectors and emphasized the role given to the regional commissions in the preparations for and follow-up to major United Nations conferences.

ECE member countries and its secretariat have responded to this challenge and will continue to do so. The interface is important for ECE member countries as it provides an opportunity for their common views to be communicated to global fora and to non-ECE member countries.

The report below provides information on contributions made by the Commission with respect to the process leading up to the 2000 review of the Beijing Platform for Action. It also briefs the Commission on the contribution made by the ECE secretariat to UNCTAD X. Looking ahead, the report speaks of the contribution ECE could make in respect of follow-up action to the International Year of Older Persons.

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ECE member countries have expressed their appreciation for the work of the ECE secretariat which has demonstrated its capacity to organize fruitful meetings related to global events even in areas for which it does not have an in-house expertise. This is, however, time consuming and resource demanding. Even when extra-budgetary resources are made available, regular staff must, de rigueur, devote considerable time to such efforts, resulting in a situation where other work is neglected.

Taking into account the above paragraphs, it may be time for all concerned to reflect on how, in future, contributions by ECE to global events can be dealt with in a less ad hoc manner, perhaps by allocating an additional post to the Office of the Executive Secretary.

I. ECE REGIONAL PREPARATORY MEETING ON THE 2000 REVIEW OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BEIJING PLATFORM FOR ACTION

1. As part of the Beijing +5 global review, the ECE Regional Preparatory Meeting on the 2000 Review of Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action was held from 19 to 21 January 2000. The event gathered approximately 1000 participants comprising representatives of 51 ECE member States and some 250 Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), representatives of other organizations of the United Nations system and specialized agencies, as well as other intergovernmental organizations.

2. The meeting was structured around five substantive themes: women and the economy, violence against women and girls, women and girls in armed conflict situations, women in power and decision-making, and institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women.

3. As evidenced by statements made at the meeting and subsequent feedback, the meeting can be considered a success. Achievements worth mentioning include:

(a) the adoption of the set of agreed conclusions by the governments which attended the Meeting. For each of the five themes, the conclusions spell out the key areas for action to be undertaken with specific recommendations and responsible actors clearly specified. Through intensive consultations between the ECE secretariat, member States and partner institutions prior to the meeting, it was possible to prepare a well developed and highly structured draft of the conclusions to be tabled at the meeting, which facilitated their smooth and rapid adoption.

(b) the significant participation of NGOs in all the components of the meeting, namely their representation in the panels, their participation in the open debate and their role in the

finalization of the agreed conclusions. This was made possible through the combination of a liberal NGO accreditation process with clear participation rules for NGOs.

(c) a solid preparatory process by the NGOs which started at the national and sub-regional levels and culminated in the NGO Working Session, held on 17-18 January 2000. The session was convened by the NGO Committee on the Status of Women and the NGO Working Group for Women in the ECE region. The NGOs organized themselves in caucuses around the five themes of the ECE meeting and elected delegates from each caucus to present their position to the meeting. At this Working Session, subregional reports were submitted of NGO coalitions from Canada, the United States of America, the European Union, the Central and East European Countries, and the Commonwealth of Independent States. As part of the programme of the Working Session, 17 workshops were also organized on various issues related to the five themes of the ECE Meeting. On the basis of recommendations from the workshops and the caucus meetings, proposals were formulated to complement the ECE Draft Agreed Conclusions. Many, though not all, of these proposals were accepted by the participating Governments and included in the final adopted conclusions. It was decided to annex the report of the NGO Working Session to the report of the ECE Meeting in order to show the NGO proposals emerging from each caucus and the extent to which they were agreed to, thereby ensuring full transparency to the process.

(d) the close cooperation of the ECE secretariat with four major partners that are most active in the region on the themes addressed, namely the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), the Council of Europe and the European Commission. All of them, according to their respective membership and areas of competence, made their expertise available in all the preparations of the Meeting, and were part of the secretariat support staff for the finalization of the agreed conclusions at the Meeting itself. Furthermore, UNDP and UNIFEM provided financial support which made it possible for a large number of NGOs from ECE countries with economies in transition to be present. They also greatly facilitated the active participation of the governmental and non-governmental representatives in the deliberations of the meeting. The experience has resulted in the establishment of excellent working relationships between ECE and the said organizations which will in turn facilitate possible future collaboration.

4. The Meeting underlined the ability of ECE to offer a region-wide forum for discussion of social and economic issues and to act as an interface between Governments and NGOs. It also provided an impetus for accelerating gender mainstreaming in the activities of the Commission, in particular as they relate to countries with economies in transition, and steps are being taken to materialize this development.

5. The Commission may wish to record its full support for the outcome agreed to at the Meeting, which constitutes the input of the ECE region to the global review process culminating in the Special Session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: Gender Equality, Development and Peace for the Twenty-first Century" in June 2000.

II. UNCTAD X

6. The Secretary-General of UNCTAD, Mr. R. Ricupero, invited the Executive Secretaries of the five regional commissions to UNCTAD X to participate in an interactive debate on "globalization, regionalization and development". The debate, to which Mr. Ricupero contributed, was moderated by Mr. Enrique Iglesias, Chairman of the IDB and former Executive Secretary of ECLAC. It addressed two topics:

(a) The impact of globalization on each region (trade, investments and consequences of the recent crises);

(b) Regionalization as a way of preparing countries for globalization with a subsidiary question on what makes a subregional arrangement effective or not.

7. From the debate on the first topic it emerged that in Europe and Latin America regionalisation is proceeding faster than globalization. In other words, the share of regional trade in the total trade of these two regions increases. In addition, the share of FDI made by western Europe in the whole of Europe increases. This is not the case in Africa and the Middle East. In Asia it differs from one sub-region to another. Two lessons can be drawn from this (i) regional governance matters, (ii) concerning globalization, a distinction should be made between what represents a trend and what is a political agenda.

8. The debate on the second topic showed the dynamism of sub-regional groupings and highlighted both the importance of political will and the construction of technical instruments common to those countries participating in a given grouping. Sub-regional groupings were seen as a means of preparing countries for the challenges of global markets and as potential protection against the risks of globalization.

9. The substantive papers prepared by each regional commission were available in advance and will be published with an introduction by the Secretary-General of UNCTAD.

10. In addition, ECE circulated a brief note on trade facilitation showing cooperation through CEFACT with other regional commissions, the World Trade Organization and UNCTAD.

11. Overall, the initiative of the Secretary-General of UNCTAD should be praised as it allowed facts and ideas to be reviewed and showed the specificity of regions which is one of the main "raisons d'être"of the regional commissions.

III. FOLLOW-UP TO THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF OLDER PERSONS: ELABORATION OF A REGIONAL STRATEGY FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE REVISED INTERNATIONAL PLAN OF ACTION ON AGEING

12. General Assembly Resolution A/54/24 "Follow-up to the International Year of Older Persons: a society for all ages" calls for a revision of the International Plan of Action on Ageing, encourages regional initiatives to provide input into this process and takes note with appreciation of the offer of the Government of Germany to host a regional ministerial conference on ageing under the aegis of the ECE in 2002.

13. The above should be considered against a background of demographic changes, which have begun to change dramatically the landscape of our societies. It is well recognized that the main demographic issue of the twenty-first century will be ageing and that the future prospects of societies and states depend on their capacity to take the opportunities and master the challenges presented by population ageing.

14. Questions related to ageing are of great importance in the context of economic and social development and will require enhanced regional cooperation: in the ECE region it is worth noting that while the total population in the ECE countries is projected to increase by 60 % by the year 2050, the number of people aged 65 years and older is expected to multiply three times faster. ECE member countries may wish therefore to promote cooperation regarding questions related to ageing and the status of older persons, as well as providing assistance to countries with economies in transition within the framework of the ECE.

15. It is therefore recommended that the Commission:

(a) decide to convene a regional ministerial conference on ageing in 2002, in order to develop a regional implementation strategy for the revised International Plan of Action on Ageing,

(b) accept with appreciation the offer of the Government of Germany to host such conference, which would be held in Berlin in September 2002, and

(c) agree to the proposed framework for preparations as outlined below.

Framework for Preparations

16. Although the conference will be held in 2002, preparations must begin sufficiently in advance in order to ensure a successful process and outcome. The following steps are proposed:

2000-2001

- A first seminar, to be convened by the Executive Secretary, would identify the issues and policy challenges related to population ageing that are of particular importance to the ECE region. On this basis, the Executive Secretary would propose to ECE member countries the main issues to be addressed by the conference.

- An Ad Hoc Informal Meeting of the Commission would subsequently approve the main themes of the conference;

- Expert seminars would then be organized to address each of these themes from a substantive point of view.

First half of 2002

- Based on the outcome of the seminars, the secretariat would prepare a draft of the regional implementation strategy of the revised International Plan of Action on Ageing, to be finalized and adopted at the Second World Assembly on Ageing (Madrid, April 2002).

September 2002

- The revised draft would be submitted to the ECE ministerial conference for adoption.

17. In order to promote synergies between the preparatory process for the World Assembly on Ageing and the one for the ECE ministerial conference on ageing, close cooperation will be developed:

(a) at the intergovernmental level between the preparatory events organized respectively by ECOSOC's Commission on Social Development and by the Economic Commission for Europe;

(b) at the secretariat level between the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) in New York and ECE.

18. The entire preparatory process would be monitored by the Commission, through reports to the Ad Hoc Informal Meeting and to the Commission's session in 2001. The Geneva-based experts could act as a consultative group for any matter requiring specific consideration.

Financing of the Process

19. Although a certain amount of substantive support is available within the ECE secretariat, notably from the Population Activities Unit and the Statistical Division, it is important to note that, given the magnitude of the work involved, additional resources would be needed in order to ensure the preparatory process and the holding of the meeting itself.

20. A trust fund which would provide a mechanism for the receipt of voluntary contributions needed to finance additional support staff as well as expert seminars and other preparatory meetings will therefore be established/identified as appropriate. Once this has been done, member States and other interested organizations will be invited to contribute as soon as possible to allow the process to proceed in a timely and planned manner. In this connection, the secretariat notes with appreciation that the Government of Germany has already expressed its willingness to make a significant contribution and it is hoped that other donors will follow suit.